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ABSTRACT

The National Education Commission on Time and Learning (NECT&L) was authorized by Congress to conduct a comprehensive review of the relationship between time and learning in elementary-secondary education, including international comparisons, the use of time in and out of school, the use of facilities, year-round professional opportunities for teachers, and the estimated costs of adopting longer school days and years. This report summarizes proceedings of two hearings held in Lawrence, Kansas, as well as a site visit to the R. J. R. Nabisco-funded "Next Centur, School," the New Stanley Elementary School in Kansas City, Kansas. The hearings focused on the school as a community institution, youth as community members, the interaction between school and community needs, and ways in which out-of-school time can be utilized. A list of participants is included. (LMI)

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HIGHLIGHTS

of the

SEVENTH PUBLIC HEARING

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NATIONAL EDUCATION COMMISSION ON TIME AND LEARNING

Lawrence, Kansas
June 17-18, 1993

EA 025 969

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PREFACE

How can schools help *all* children succeed? How can school and communities best use out-of-school time to enhance and improve the education of children? With more time available for learning, will educators do more of the same or organize learning differently? What do families think of different school calendars? Who decides best how to incorporate technology into new visions of learning organized around systemic change? What impact will changing the time involved in schooling have on how we prepare teachers for their profession and on how they develop their own skills as teachers?

These questions and others challenged the members of the National Education Commission on Time and Learning (NECTL) and its guests at a two-day visit to Lawrence, Kansas on June 17-18, 1993. The visit included two public hearings and a site visit to the RJR Nabisco-funded "Next Century School," the New Stanley Elementary School in Kansas City, Kansas. The following pages summarize those events. The testimony of individual witness is also available to the public.

NECTL is an independent advisory body, authorized by the U.S. Congress in Public Law 102-62, the Education Council Act of 1992. Its members—appointed by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives—are to present a report to Congress and the Secretary of Education by April, 1994. The Commission has been asked to conduct comprehensive review of the relationship between time and learning in elementary and secondary education, including international comparisons, the use of time in- and out-of-school, the use of facilities, year-round professional opportunities for teachers, and the estimated costs of adopting longer school days and longer school years.

The Lawrence public hearings were one of a series of hearings and site-based visits scheduled by the Commission as part of its fact-finding efforts. This Summary has been prepared to respond to numerous public requests for information on the progress of the Commission's work. Copies of the complete testimony of individual witnesses are available from the Commission's office.

Milton Goldberg
Executive Director

ACTIVITIES AND WITNESSES

On June 17, 1993, the National Education Commission on Time and Learning visited the New Stanley Elementary School, a public school with funding from the RJR Nabisco Foundation to experiment with teaching and learning styles, new models of staff development, and new time patterns of schooling. The Commission also held local and national hearings on the topic of the uses of out-of-school time to enhance and improve education.

The Commission received testimony from the following individuals at the local hearing, held on June 17 at the Space Technology Center of the University of Kansas in Lawrence:

Local Hearing Witnesses

Dr. Charles Greenwood
Director
Juniper Garden Children's Program
University of Kansas

Dr. Marlin Berry
Superintendent of Schools
Lindsborg, Kansas

Dr. Marvin Kaiser
Associate Dean
College of Arts and Sciences
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas

Robert L. Wehling
Vice-president for Public Affairs
Procter & Gamble
Cincinnati, Ohio

On June 18, 1993, the Commission conducted its national hearing on the topic of Out-of-School Learning, receiving testimony from the following individuals:

National Hearing Witnesses

Hon. Sam Brownback
Secretary of Agriculture
State of Kansas

Brice B. Durbin
Former Executive Director
National Federation of State High School Associations

Marcia McFarland
Associate Professor
Extension Specialist, 4-H and Youth Program
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas

OUT-OF-SCHOOL LEARNING

LOCAL HEARING TESTIMONY

The hearing in Kansas provided Commissioners with a rural perspective and in that regard was much different from what they had grown accustomed to at previous hearings. The focus of testimony returned time and again to the school as a community institution, to young people as community members, and to the interaction between school and community needs.

Lawrence was a good place to discuss the issue of how out-of-school time is and can be used, since the bond between school and community seems more visible there than in more urbanized communities. Community institutions, Commissioners heard, are where schools are likely to turn to help meet problems and to both supplement and enhance educational goals.

Perhaps the most telling illustration of the importance of the school-community connection in rural areas arose at the end of the first day's testimony—not from an invited expert but from a high school student who had come to the hearing simply because she wanted to tell the Commissioners what was on her heart. Rochelle Manville studies at a high school near Lawrence; she is one of those young people to whom school is not just a place to get an education, but an eight-lane access road to just about everything she cares about and can manage to squeeze in. She belongs to many school clubs and is active in school government, her church, and a host of other activities. As a member of the Kansas State Council, she is perhaps most dedicated to 4-H. Listening to her, one gets the impression that, for her, the issue of time is one of genuine scarcity.

Thus her fervent wish was not for more time in school but less—so she could get more done elsewhere. "Longer school days and shorter breaks," she said, "will cut down on other important community activities kids are involved in. That's where they need to be—volunteering, making a contribution." Her philosophy of education was straightforward: "You don't get know-how and common sense in class." Her whole experience of life was that you got those things by being involved in what your neighbors, your friends, and your parents are involved in.

In one way or another, it was the school-community connection so prized by Michelle Manville that dominated the Lawrence hearings.

"Active Engagement"

The rural setting of the hearings notwithstanding, the Commission's first witness, Dr. Charles Greenwood, shared what he had learned from "27 years experience working with urban, at-risk youth at the Juniper Gardens Children's Project," a Chapter 1 school in Kansas City, Missouri.

"If, in business, time is money," he began, "then in education, time is opportunity to learn." The average public school career of the a child in the U.S. is about 15,120 hours, but the key to understanding what happens in that time, Greenwood insisted, lies in understanding the concept of "active engagement."

Studies conducted by Greenwood and his associates confirm the commonsense notion that "students' active, academic behavior during instruction (i.e., time spent writing, reading aloud, participating in tasks, asking and answering questions—what they call "active engagement") is the key to understanding the process of academic learning both at school and at home. They found that by the end of middle school, a 1.6-year cumulative gap in "active engagement" had opened up between low- and high-SES students, and that students in Chapter 1 schools were engaged in academic subject matter for only 2.6 hours of a 7-hour school day, i.e., only 37% of the time.

The premier challenge in increasing academic achievement, in Greenwood's view, was to obtain better learning in the available time by using instructional methods and practices that expand active engagement among all students. "Any definition of 'quality' in instructional time [should] include 'active engagement,'" he said.

Complementing Active Engagement with Out-of-School Strategies

Several strategies in the home, in the neighborhood, and in after-school programs can teach lessons about enhancing active engagement, Greenwood said. These strategies have largely involved training parents in relatively simple skills to increase learning at home, which can, in turn, transfer to school.

- **Working with Parents to Develop Tutoring and Parenting Skills.** Juniper Gardens has experienced much success in helping parents teach their children the "pre-academic skills," of learning new words and writing numbers and letters. Parent tutoring procedures have also been developed and validated. Work in the neighborhood through the Juniper Gardens's "Responsive Parenting Program" has also helped parents to learn parenting skills and motivational strategies directed at their children's school work.
- **Homework**. Students' completion of homework, with a stress on accuracy, was greatly increased through a home-school communication network involving teacher, student, and parent.
- **After School and Summer Peer Tutoring Programs**. Both have been in extensive use at Juniper Gardens since the 1960s, utilizing a nearby housing project and churches. They have been successful in engaging students out-of-school academic work.
- **Other out-of-school strategies** used at Juniper Gardens to build positive social attitudes with a spill-over effect into learning have included day care, recreational activities, and after-school work programs. Taken together, these "pro-social" approaches had "important developmental consequences," Greenwood testified.

Among the recommendations arising from the Juniper Gardens experience, three stand out: (1) that nonschool hours represent a largely untapped resource for improving academic achievement, particularly among low-SES children, and should be used; (2) that improvement in achievement and prevention of an achievement gap is most clearly affected by cumulative "active engagement," . which idea should be taught; and (3) programs targeted at increasing achievement must be on-going in all at-risk communities in the country. "The benefits from one generation to another," Greenwood said, "far outweigh the costs."

In response to questioning by Commissioner Schwartz, Greenwood stated that he favored a longer school year for all students, not just low-SES students.

A Street-Level View

Dr. Marlin Berry spoke to the Commissioners about out-of-school learning and the school-community interface from the perspective of a school administrator whose responsibilities included getting as much out of the school day and school year as possible.

The Kansas state legislature has recently told schools they must add six days to the school calendar (from 180 to 186) over a three-year period; Berry's own schools are halfway through this expansion, choosing to devote the additional time directly to instruction.

Echoing sentiments heard across the country by the Commission, Berry reported that professional development time is considered by him and his teachers as essential to education reform. A "block scheduling" technique had been approved for middle schools, in which core teachers "share students" through more than one formal class period; a summer school has also been instituted. Paid summer time for teachers is devoted to developing instructional units.

Berry said he favors a longer school year over a longer school day, in part because less time is wasted when there is more continuous flow of instruction, and because a longer year reduces the review time after the summer break. Crucial to reform, and his biggest problem, he noted, was the need for more time for staff development and curriculum work. "It's difficult," he said, "to ask a teacher to stand in front of a class all day, which is where they need to be, then to stay after 4:00 to revise curricula. Hiring substitutes creates a less productive day." Berry also stressed helping parents understand that they need to give their own time to meet their children's learning needs.

The "Brain Drain"

Dr. Marvin Kaiser, associate dean of the College of Arts & Science of Kansas State University, asked the Commissioners to see the "brain drain" of college-age young people migrating from Kansas as the context for his testimony. Kansas students are leaving rural communities in high numbers, he noted, citing a recent survey of National Merit Scholarship semifinalists, only 38% of whom had listed a Kansas school as one of their top three choices for higher education. Forty of sixty Kansas counties had a net decrease in population in the last 50 years, he said.

"What," he asked, "are we doing to feed, or not to feed, these kids? All they see in Kansas are limited jobs, limited incomes, and limited opportunities." In the 1980s, he reported, 91% of all jobs created in Kansas were in metropolitan counties. "They think that if they want to make something of themselves, they have to move away."

On the positive side, he noted that the successful migration of rural Kansas youth to urban centers spoke well for the quality of the education they received back home. The key question becomes, however: How does school become part of answer in the whole range of issues that contribute to rural economic development?

Local schools and communities are increasingly embracing new in-school and out-of-school strategies to "stem the tide of out-migration." Among them: integrating community service learning into the school curriculum; youth entrepreneurship programs, such as those offered by Future Business Leaders of America; youth leadership development programs; and business-education partnerships. Schools, Kaiser noted, are "proactively developing curricula which reflect the value of connecting service to the community and the learning experiences gained from this opportunity." Some schools are developing a service requirement for graduation and others are using youth entrepreneurship initiatives as educational tools, not only to train young people, but to develop local business opportunities. Kaiser quoted Karen Pitman in support of his argument: "Youth problems are not a barrier to youth development; youth development is the way to avoid problems with youth."

Noting the experience of Kansas, Inc., a public/private venture addressing these issues, Kaiser pointed to four underlying keys to the contribution of out-of-school strategies to a commitment and a vision for rural America:

- youth development programs that focus on young people as resources and the community as an educational laboratory;
- a pedagogical commitment to experiential and service learning;
- a commitment to providing opportunities for students to exercise responsibility to better their communities; and
- fostering the idea that schools and communities can work together as partners.

Asked for specifics by Commissioner Jones, Kaiser recommended such concrete steps as "putting youth on the boards of key community organizations" as a way to give them a "stake" in the community—preparing them to become active and contributing citizens. "We learn to be good citizens," he said, "by observing good citizenship and by acting as good citizens."

Commissioner Higgins then spoke about the relationship between school and community in rural areas. "Traditionally," he said, "people in rural areas supported schools because they saw in them a direct connection between education and the values of the community. If schools are to become more than a road out of town today, they need the financial and moral support of the community as never before. But people have to be able to see the direct connection between education and their values."

Familiar Issues Revisited

Robert Wehling, vice-president for public affairs at Procter & Gamble, rounded out the day by reinforcing testimony heard by the Commission in other venues. He spoke from the position of membership on the Cincinnati School Board and Procter & Gamble's partnership with Taft High School, in one of Cincinnati's poorest neighborhoods. He made five main points:

- First, there is common sense merit in the notion that more time on task, whether in the form of a longer school day or year, should have a beneficial effect on student achievement;
- Second, and in contrast, "I would not increase one minute of school time if it meant doing the same thing we do now, in the same way, only longer." What is taught and how it is taught are "significantly more important" than how much time is spent. "The bottom line is, don't change time if you don't change content. More of the same for most kids is a bad idea."
- Third, time in school should really vary with individual student need. Thus, *accessibility* of the schools is a significant issue, apart from time. They should be open flexibly, Wehling said, seven days a week year round, and for a longer period during the day, with learner needs dictating multiple schedules. "The time has come," he said, "to throw away the clock and the calendar. In their place, we should arrange students for solving problems together, working with multi-age groups, making use of the resources of the community...for as long as it takes."
- Fourth, he encouraged the Commission to explore two areas: (a) to focus on "the absolute criticality" of children acquiring basic reading and comprehension skills by third grade, even if it takes out-of-school time, and (b) to focus on writing skills.
- Finally, Wehling spoke to the issue of expectations. "If, on a scale of 1-10 we put "Time on Task" at about 6 in terms of its importance for education," he said, "I would put 'expectations' at 11 in terms of what it takes to produce achievement."

Commissioner Jones asked Wehling to draw on his corporate experience to address the issue of after-school work and its effect on secondary education particularly. Although he saw no good general answer, Wehling said his personal view was that after-school jobs with no relation to any career ladder was not useful. What we need to do is find ways to support kids in career pathways earlier."

Commissioner Doyle wanted to know whether Wehling's view of flexible time encompassed the notion of kids getting their diplomas in different amounts of time, depending on their achievement and mastery. Wehling replied, "Why not? What we really need to do is abolish K-12 education and the university systems, and institute instead a 0-to-21 system in which the child is looked at holistically." In response to Commissioner Schwartz's question about professional development, Wehling noted that the average teacher spends about one-tenth the time a business executive does in professional development activity.

Kansas's secretary of agriculture, the Hon. Sam Brownback launched the hearings on June 18 with a very brief statement on the relationship of the well-being of Kansas, an agricultural state, to the clear requirements that American students be prepared for a globally competitive world and economy.

A New Era for Agriculture—and Education

Contrary to stereotypes, he noted, agriculture is one of today's most complex industries (agriculture is a $250 billion business globally). One of the main problems faced by American agriculture is of its own making: It has been so successful in using technology that it is today bedeviled by excess capacity. Twenty percent of the land available for growing wheat in Kansas, for example, is banked, and under a government subsidy that wastes taxpayer money. By way of illustrating a way ahead, Brown pointed to the growing nonfood agricultural products industry, which is part of the reorientation of agriculture in America, e.g., golf tees made from potato starch, wound dressings made from animal collagen, and bio-diesel fuel rendered from beef fat, soy oil, and vegetable oil.

If our children are to function effectively in a new environment, he argued, they will have to learn more, and that will require more time in school. There is no good reason, he noted, that schools cannot take advantage of local businesses to help teach plant and animal biology and business skills. Out-of-school contexts are also where students can learn the ins and outs of the complex relationship between environmental issues and population growth in the Third World—to name but a few possibilities.

Asked to reflect on the contributions of one of rural America's best known out-of school activities, 4-H, Brown proudly confessed his membership as a youth, and praised 4-H as a "great example of hands-on learning." Presaging the later testimony of Marcia McFarland, he called

attention to the fact that the 4-H programs in Kansas City, Missouri, Chicago, and Philadelphia are among the fastest growing in the country. "Rural American has a lot to offer," he said.

In a similar vein and in response to a query from Commissioner Doyle, Brown agreed that the Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture might well serve as an interesting paradigm. "There are excellent lessons there," he said. "The productivity base of America agriculture exploded with technology, as the Extension Service communicated the *science* of farming to millions of America farmers. Today, though, it's farmers who drive the system. They are by-passing the Extension Agent and going directly to the scientists and asking, 'What do you have that can help me.'" The implication, it seemed, was not that education should copy the Extension Service, but that today's and tomorrow's learners have to know well how to function in an age of unmediated information—to find it, manipulate it, and use it effectively.

The Case for High School Activities

Brice B. Durbin, former executive director of the National Federation of High School Associations made the most cogent and comprehensive case for the importance of out-of-school activities presented in Lawrence. And the most far-reaching. "An academic program, without supplementary activities,'" he stated flatly, "is simply incomplete."

Historically, he reminded the Commissioners, high school activities have gone through four distinct stages in American education: initial resistance by educators because they were not part of the academic program, followed by tolerance, followed by an increasing recognition of their value, and ending today with a process in which school activities are being continually refined and protected from exploitation.

School activities, said Durbin, convey many advantages to students:

- A number of independent studies show that school activities support the academic mission of the schools, as evidenced by the better attendance records, higher GPAs, lower drop-out rates, and fewer discipline problems among participants;
- They are inherently educational, in that they foster such educational objectives as teamwork, sportsmanship, self-discipline, self-confidence, and leadership;

- They foster success in later life and are an excellent predictor of later success. Results of a 1987 *Fortune* survey indicated that 95% of the executives surveyed participated in sports in high school; 54% were involved in student government; 37% in music; and 18% in the school's publication; and
- From a cost standpoint, school activities are a bargain. Typically, school activities such as interest clubs, athletic programs, speech and forensics, band, and other arts programs represent from 1-3% of the total school budget.

Among the results of a 1985 survey of high school principals and nearly 7,000 high school students in the U.S. were that: 95% believed participation teaches valuable lessons that cannot be learned in class; 99% agree that participation in activities promotes citizenship; and 72% said there is strong support for school activity programs among patents and in the community.

Durbin told Commissioners that he was "a strong believer" in a longer school day and year," but that he would use the additional time not for more instruction but for more supervised school activities. He would extend the day to include more children in school activities, including an aggressive program to teach ethics, sportsmanship, and personal integrity. He would also, he said, favor participation in at least one school *service* activity as a graduation requirement, on the grounds that "students who serve are better-rounded citizens." Interestingly for a rural setting, Durbin testified that the smaller the school, the higher the participation rate in school activities tended to be. "It's simple," he said. "The school needs them, and the kids get the message."

4-H: The Surprising Paradigm

A highly enthusiastic Marcia McFarland serves as an Extension Specialist for 4-H and Youth Programs out of Kansas State, and is this year working on assignment to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cooperative Extension Service. She spoke to Commissioners about the Extension Service's activity as a model for out-of-school learning.

National 4-H is one of the largest youth organizations in the nation, serving 5.6 million young people, ages 5-19. Contrary to its "farmer" image, half of its members live in cities, suburbs, and metropolitan areas. It is unique among youth service organizations in that it is rooted in the land-grant college system; 4-H is also computer-networked throughout the country through the NSF

"Superhighway." Its mission is to influence youth development through engagement in positive, constructive, hands-on learning activity.

McFarland's testimony focused primarily on the national 4-H National At-Risk Youth Initiative, a focus of the organization since 1991. "Documented and demonstrated changes in the lives of youth and children is significant," she said.

Stressing the research base of the program, McFarland said it focuses on educational experiences that supplement and do not compete with the formal school curriculum. "For children to become competent, productive adults," McFarland said, "certain requirements have to be met, and this is where we zero in." As examples of these requirements. she gave things like personal safety, a structured environment and a sense of control over their own lives, developing a feeling of belonging, developing self-worth, instilling the idea that they can contribute, experiences of competence and mastery, self-awareness, and developing a personal vision.

Among at-risk children particularly, "survival competencies" such as health through nutrition and exercise, personal social skills such as friendship and listening, knowledge and reasoning skills, vocational skills, and citizenship skills.

Following the presentation of two video clips portraying elements of the "At-Risk" program in inner city areas in New Jersey, McFarland stressed, in conversations with the Commissioners, that one of the chief factors in the success of all 4-H programs was that "children are involved in planning their own activities and in their own development. They have more freedom in 4-H than in the formal classroom," she said.

In a reprise on the testimony of Charles Greenwood, McFarland pointed out that another important element of the program, was parental involvement. Training is given to unemployed parents to become teachers in the program. Their charges, she reported, have shown entire grade-level increases in math and reading since the program started two years ago.

In a response to a question from Commissioner Jones about whether a "marriage between schools and service organizations like 4-H could help defray the costs of education," McFarland replied that "programs form 3-5 one afternoon a week won't help. Parents have to be able to take advantage of such programs every day for them to make a difference to their kids."

SITE VISIT TO NEW STANLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

JUNE 17, 1993

New Stanley Elementary School in Kansas City, Kansas, is one of 15 schools in the nation to have received funding from the RJR Nabisco Foundation as a "New Century School." The school received $750,000 over a three-year period to engage in innovative and risk-taking educational practice. The student population is divided in almost three equal groups: 33% African-American, 33% Caucasian, 6% Native American, and 27% Hispanic; 80% are on free or reduced lunch. The New Stanley annual budget is $270,000 of a total $110 million for the district.

Additional time is a key feature of the New Stanley experiment. School is in session almost 11 months a year; students attend 205 days [four 9-10-week quarters], and teachers are on duty 226 days. A significant feature of the use of the calendar is that four planning or professional development blocks of five days each and four additional planning days are built into the schedule. There is also early dismissal every Wednesday at 1:15 to allow for planning and professional development time; students needing supervision attend a day care center at a neighboring church—an interesting form of community partnering.

The school is grounded in an "all children can learn" philosophy of education and seeks to implement three educational models simultaneously: outcomes based education, the Yale Child (Comer) Model, and the efficacy model developed by Harvard's Jeff Howard. The models are supported by professional development activities for the staff and continual assessment activity within the school. In assessing educational outcomes, for example, the stress is on multiple evidence. "There is no one-shot deal here," said principal Donna Hardy.

According the school's staff development director, however, "the extended school year is the least significant thing about New Stanley." What is significant is that the extra time is devoted almost entirely to staff development. "What we are trying to do here is create well-developed, professional people. You don't get that with two inservice days a year."

All teaching is team-based. Three-member teams have, until now, stayed with one group of children for the grades 1-3 cycle, before handing them on to a new team for grades 4-6. But because teachers have experienced difficulty in "ratcheting down" to an earlier level after having worked with children at the higher end of the developmental cycle, the cycles are to be changed to two-years.

Commissioners had an opportunity to visit with and question four students, all of whom expressed satisfaction with the virtually year-round schedule, although each seemed to like a different aspect of it. One feature that was much discussed was the "conflict management" program, run by the school's counselor, in which students learned how to help resolve problems that arise between their peers. It is a much prized distinction to be a conflict manager.

New Stanley is much concerned with computer literacy, each classroom having some terminals of its own, and a computer lab being an important instructional feature. Teachers are clear, however, that the computers are used only as a tool for learning; the machines have no instructional standing in and of themselves.

New Stanley's success as a pilot school for the district has raised the issue of replicability. Although the RJR Nabisco grant funds were instrumental in getting things going (all the money was used for teachers' salaries, to support the extra days), the teachers who spoke to Commissioners believe that it will be possible for them to continue the program in some form when the funds run out after this year.

The staff believe the experiment has paid off, and cited 1993 test scores in support of the contention. As a starting point, the Kansas City, Kansas School District *guaranteed* that all students entering middle school from New Stanley would do so at or above grade level, and that guarantee has been met. Overall, New Stanley students are at or above national grade levels in every area except third grade reading, and their Chapter 1 children are "doing better" than other Chapter 1 children in other elementary schools in the district, according to principal Donna Hardy.

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